

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 00810 222308Z

12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 /079 W

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R 222200Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5202

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SUVA 810

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PDIP FJ TN AS NZ XP

SUBJ: SOVIET/CHINESE ACTIVITIES AND SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

1. FIJI MEDIA HAS GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE TO PRIMIN MULDOON S RECENT NZPA INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY SAID COMMUNIST SUPERPOWER INTEREST IN INCREASINGLY INDEPENDENT SOUTH PACIFIC WILL PROBABLY DOMINATE NEXT WEEK S SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM. MEDIA HAS ALSO NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA WILL BE REPRESENTED AT FORUM BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, SENATOR ROBERT COTTON.

2. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF EDITORIAL ENTITLED "POWER POLITICS IN PACIFIC" IN JULY 23 FIJI TIMES: "IN RECENT WEEKS FRASER AND MULDOON HAVE EXPRESSED FEARS ABOUT INTENTIONS OF EXPANDING RUSSIAN AND CHINESE PRESENCE IN SP REGION. MULDOON HAS FORESHADOWED GONZ SERIOUS CONCERN BY SAYING THAT FORUM MEETING IN NAURU (JULY 26-28) WOULD OPERATE IN CONTEXT OF CHANGES IN REGION. SEEMS BOTH LEADERS SOMEWHAT OVEREACTING TO SO-CALLED "COMMUNIST THREAT" AND ARE IMAGINING PRESENCE OF

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PAGE 02 SUVA 00810 222308Z

TOO MANY REDS UNDER THEIR BEDS. IF INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES OF

REGION FIND IT PLEASANT TO BE WOODED BY COMMUNIST SUPERPOWERS AND CHOOSE TO PLAY ONE AGAINST OTHER OR PLAY THEM BOTH AGAINST WESTERN SUPERPOWERS, THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH IT IF THEIR ACTIONS ARE CALCULATED TO EXPLOIT RESOURCES OF BIG POWERS IN HELPING THEM ACHIEVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES. BOTH PRIMINS SHOULD DRAW COMFORT FROM FACT THAT INDEPENDENT PACIFIC COUNTRIES ARE FIERCELY PROUD OF THEIR NEW-FOUND SOVERIEGNTY AND HAVE SHOWN LITTLE INCLINATION TOWARDS ALIGNING THEMSELVES WITH ANY POWER BLOC FOR IDEOLOGICAL OR OTHER REASONS. ON CONTRARY, THEY HAVE FAR MORE IN COMMON WITH WESTERN WORLD WHOSE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THEY HAVE INHERITED. PERHAPS NOT FRASER, BUT CERTAINLY MULDOON MUST BLAME HIMSELF FOR ALIENATING TO A DEGREE ISLAND LEADERS WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN FRIENDS OF NEW ZEALAND. UTTERANCES HAVE SHOWN SUPRISING DISREGARD FOR SENSITIVITY OF FEELINGS OF PACIFIC PEOPLE AND GONZ TREATMENT OF DELICATE ISLAND IMMIGRATION PROBLEM HAS CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA. IF FRASER WERE BENT SERIOUSLY ON WINNING FRIENDS IN REGION, SURELY HE HIMSELF OR FONMIN PEACOCK WOULD BE LEADING DELEGATION TO NAURU. BOTH LEADERS ARE IN AMERICA. NO DOUBT AMERICA IS IMPORTANT BUT PRESENCE OF EITHER AT FORUM WOULD HAVE SHOWN AUSTRALIA S TRUE INTEREST IN PACIFIC. SENATOR COTTON IS EMINENTLY COMPETENT MAN... BUT HE IS COMPARATIVELY JUNIOR CABINET MINISTER AND WILL BE AUSTRALIA'S CHIEF SPOKESMAN AT FORUM. IT IS, THEREFORE, NOT SURPRISING THAT RUSSIANS AND CHINESE ARE MAKING THRUST IN PACIFIC."

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